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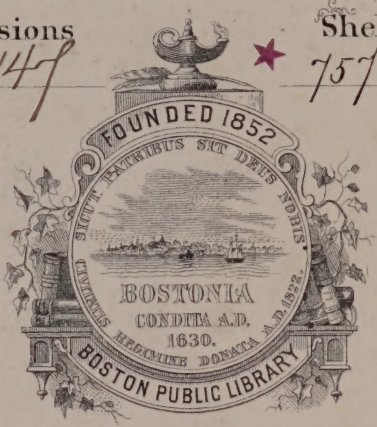

Received Mar. 21, 1889.

REPORT OF THE CELEBRATION

OF THE

GOLDEN JUBILEE

OF THE

SOCIETY OF ST. VINCENT DE PAUL

HELD IN

BOSTON, MAY, 1883.

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PRINTED BY CASHMAN, KEATING & CO.,
FAYETTE COURT, 603 WASHINGTON STREET,
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Society of St. Vincent de Paul.

Particular Council of Boston.

Boston, June 10, 1883.

In March a circular was received from the Superior Council of New York, containing a translation of the letter received from the President-General of the Society, which called attention to the fact that the present year is the fiftieth since the foundation of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, and expressing the hope that the anniversary would be celebrated everywhere by religious ceremonies, and other exercises appropriate to the occasion. The circular contained also, the programme of a triduum, as intended to be carried out in Paris, and the plan proposed by the Superior Council, to which the Society was requested to conform, if possible.

The circular was immediately forwarded to the conferences, the matter of arranging for the celebration in this city, taken charge of by the Council of Direction, and the work sufficiently completed to make a satisfactory report at the next meeting of the Particular Council, which was held on April 4th. At this meeting the Council was authorized to attend to all the details.

April 7th, a circular was sent to each Conference, which is reproduced here, as giving the best record of the proposed arrangements, and, as it contains several quotations from the

letter of the Council-General, whose manner of expressing the suggestions offered for the occasion cannot be improved, and it is hoped may not be lost sight of.

To The Presidents of Conferences :

Dear Sirs and Brothers : In accordance with the wishes of the Council-General, seconded by the Conferences of France, and with the approval of our Superior Council of New York, we now address you in relation of the proper observance of the Golden Jubilee, the Fiftieth Anniversary of the foundation of our Society.

You have already received the circular of the Superior Council, calling attention to this event in the history of the Society, which contains a partial translation of the letter from the Council-General, and you have doubtless read that letter in the bulletin lately sent you, in which are embodied many suggestions, so that it remains for this Council only to place before the Conferences some definite plan whereby the festival may be observed in a manner becoming its importance.

The Council of Direction, after due deliberation, with the advice of its Reverend Spiritual Director, and the approval of His Grace, the Most Reverend Archbishop, desire to ask your attention to the following arrangements, as seeming to meet, as far as practical, the first suggestions offered in the circular letter :

First. On Friday, May 4th, a Mass of Thanksgiving to be offered "for all the benefits our Lord has heaped upon us."

Second. On Saturday, May 5th, "A Requiem Mass for our innumerable deceased members, and our still more numerous poor, whom we have lost in the half century which has elapsed since our foundation." At these two Masses, all beneficiaries of the Society should be invited to assist, "where the dispositions of the visited families and circumstances permit it ; for if the prayers of all are blessed by God, how much more so are the prayers of the poor — those members cherished by our Lord Jesus Christ."

Third. On Sunday, May 6th, at the Cathedral, at 8.30 o'clock, a Mass, "having for its object a petition to our Lord to bestow on us the graces which we need to continue our works. . . . Let us then pray our Lord, through the intercession of His Holy Mother, and of St. Vincent de Paul, to replace by fresh and devoted helpers, those who, voluntarily or not, have departed from us." At this Mass, the usual seats will be reserved for the members of the

Society, all of whom are invited, and it is earnestly hoped all will be prepared to receive Holy Communion.

The exercises of Sunday evening will take place at St. James' Church, at 7.30 o'clock, and will consist of,—

Introductory remarks by the Rev. T. H. Shahan, Spiritual Director of the Particular Council.

An address by His Grace, the Archbishop.

A sermon by the Rev. J. O'Connor, S. J., President of Boston College, and,

Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament.

A collection to defray the expenses incident to the celebration will be taken up at the evening service.

The Masses of Thanksgiving and Requiem need not necessarily be offered on the days above named; this part of the *Triduum* will be left to each Conference to carry out for itself, having due regard for the convenience of its Spiritual Director.

Admission to St. James Church will be by ticket, of which a sufficient number will be furnished each Conference, and all interested in our work should be remembered on this occasion.

Special invitations and tickets will be issued to the clergy.

Regarding the second suggestion of the Circular Letter, we recommend it without comment: "On the occasion of the golden wedding, we urge the Conferences to bestow a special alms on their poor, either by increasing the humble assistance we give them, or by adding to it some of those little presents of which the poor, and especially children, are all the more sensible that they seldom get them, or by making to some of them an extraordinary and exceptional grant, to extricate them from some real embarrassment. We have, unfortunately, very seldom an opportunity of giving to our poor, not only what is necessary, but some of what is so rare to them, called *joy*. Let us try, on this occasion, to procure it for them. We shall be rewarded for it a hundred-fold."

The third suggestion we leave for your examination in the bulletin, reminding you that we should "labor to leave behind us, if possible, a lasting memorial of this anniversary by founding some work. . . . Everywhere, zeal can be stimulated by means of some foundation, and, consequently, a real progress with regard to the faith might be realized under the auspices of St. Vincent de Paul, and as a memorial of his pious charitable inventions. . . . That everywhere there is some fresh and more important good to be done. . . . They complain in some places that the Society has

lost some of the high character and activity which it formerly possessed. This festival will certainly afford a favorable opportunity for putting an end to this state of things where it exists."

In conclusion, let us ask that the festival be made "as pious and practical as possible." We cannot, for the success of our festival, secure too much the interest of fervent and generous souls, and relying on your zeal to do your part in carrying out the arrangements as herein announced, and asking that you make a special report to this Council of the action taken by your Conference, we are,

Yours very truly in St. Vincent de Paul,

JOHN J. MUNDO,
Secretary.

THOMAS F. RING,
President.

Several of the Conferences report having had the Masses of Thanksgiving and Requiem offered, and the other suggestions as to giving extra donations and the foundation of a special work seem not to have been overlooked; the latter, though necessarily very modest, may yet bear abundant fruit. The Mass at the Cathedral on Sunday morning, May 6th, was very largely attended, and one hundred and seventy-five members received Holy Communion, the largest number the Society has had the edification of seeing approach the altar for a number of years.

For the evening services St. James Church had been placed at the disposal of the Society by its pastor, the Spiritual Director of the Particular Council, the Rev. T. H. Shahan. Besides the distribution of tickets to members, invitations were extended to gentlemen connected with all the charitable Catholic organizations, and other non-Catholic charities, and members of the city government associated with the city's charities.

The exercises at St. James Church included an excellent musical programme, prepared for the occasion, consisting of Mozart's "Magnificat," Gregorian "O Salutaris," "Tantum Ergo," and Haydn's "Te Deum." After a voluntary on the organ, the addresses of the evening were delivered in the following order:

Address of Rev. T. H. Shahan, Spiritual Director of the Particular Council.

Most Reverend Archbishop, Reverend Clergy, Gentlemen of Associate Charities, Brothers in St. Vincent de Paul: —

We meet to-night to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the foundation of our Society, and the twenty-second anniversary of its establishment in this city and diocese, by the pastor of this church, then the Very Reverend Vicar-General, now our much-respected and well-beloved Archbishop.

All associations of men renew the memory of their origin, to recall the benefits received, and to maintain the spirit of their institute.

Sons of St. Vincent de Paul, we avail ourselves of our first Golden Jubilee to blow into new life and brighter flames the coals of divine faith and charity that warmed us into existence; and to recall the memory and examples of our pious and charitable founders, that we may walk in their footsteps, and perpetuate the work of charity with which they have endowed God's Church. The reverend orator of the occasion will, no doubt, dwell upon their works and their merits. As your spiritual director, I feel called to remind you briefly of our origin as a society, and the spirit that should animate us.

Your Society originated in the ardent hearts of some young Catholic laymen in France, who conceived that the glory of God and the desire of their own perfection, called them to aid and assist their clergy in providing for the corporal and spiritual wants of the poor, in a plain and unpretentious manner, under the guidance of their constituted ecclesiastical superiors. Thus, love for God, love for the poor, humility, and due regard for constituted spiritual authority, are the characteristics of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul. In consequence, you make no vows, you take no oaths, you assume no responsibility. You make no sacrifice, other than a portion of your time and means. You make no laws, nor take

on yourselves any obligations beyond the laws of faith and charity. When these grow cold you are free to depart.

You have no ambition to serve, no social position to gain. You have no consolation to expect but the approbation of your conscience, and no reward awaits you but the final one. All you seek in this brotherhood is fraternal union, and the opportunity of doing good. The only motive that urges you is the invitation of our Lord, "Do good to all men," "Love one another as I have loved you," and the assurance that whatsoever we should do to our fellow men for His sake, He would hold as done for Himself. Your Society meets a great want of modern times. The Church always preached and taught charity as means of salvation. Individuals have bestowed their goods on the poor, and communities have been formed to look after their wants. In every age individuals have bestowed their goods or have founded hospitals; communities have sprung up to serve the poor. But these were only local, and could not reach to every place where want existed. In every city, and, indeed, in every parish, was felt the want of an organized system of relief, ready to adapt itself to every requirement of charity and every phase of suffering. This is the aim of your Society, which is intended to exercise all the corporal and spiritual works of mercy, without any other limitation than lack of men and means. No work too great nor too humble. You are by turns to carry alms to the poor, and to instruct and look after children. To beg for alms for the poor, and to console the afflicted, in imitation of the ages of faith. To delight to make yourselves servants of the poor. Your charity is universal. It extends to all, regardless of creed or color. You are taught to look upon all as fellow creatures, coming from God and returning again to God. The poor you are taught to love as God's special friends, to whom he denies the things of this life, to recompense them more richly in heaven. God has blessed this work, and your Society has spread over France and the Catholic world. Men of all stations and walks of life have gladly entered and made it the means of satisfying their charitable zeal. For in this Society men may do but little, or they may do much, as charity urges them.

We are called to give thanks to God, from whom all graces flow, as the author of this Society. We have to thank God for calling us to be members. Our merit is not the little good we may have done, but our good-will, and our share in the good works done in the Society. Renew the resolutions you make in your prayers at every meeting, viz., of giving your goods to the poor and expending yourselves for their souls, in hope of that heavenly kingdom which Jesus has promised to all that do works of mercy in his name.

We have to grace our Jubilee, the presence of our Most Reverend Archbishop, and the founder of the Conferences in this diocese. The interest he then manifested in us has not decreased. We will beg him to bless the tree that he has planted, that it may flourish and produce more fruit.

Your Grace, you behold assembled here to-night, the Society that you introduced twenty-two years ago. It has grown into a goodly tree, with branches overshadowing all your diocese. Deign to address them a few words of good cheer, and grant your paternal benediction to themselves and their work. Your encouragement and blessing will renew their energy, and so extend the good work in every parish in your archdiocese.

Address of His Grace, the Most Reverend Archbishop.

My Dear Brethren of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul:

It is certainly to me a great pleasure to be here this evening at the celebration of your Golden Jubilee. When those few men in Paris commenced this great work, they certainly could not look forward to such a day as this in half a century; and although we had the past before us when we commenced this work in the parish of St. James; and although we had a right to hope that it would increase, seeing how it had increased in other lands, yet certainly we could scarcely have foreseen this — that so many members would belong to this Society in this city, and that in these twenty-two years

it would have produced such fruits as it has produced. The little weed certainly has brought great fruit, and it has gone on increasing year after year; but if we had been told at that time that this scene would come within twenty-two years, and that, in this city alone, we should spend each year from $20,000 to $25,000, we certainly would scarcely have been able to believe it. And yet you see how God gives the increase of the little we attempt to do for charity. Charity is the foundation of your Society. Charity will continue it. Without it, it must fall. God's charity is not simple almsgiving. You are not a bureau of benefactors; you are not a board of those who give money to the poor. That is not the Society of St. Vincent de Paul. You are to give charity to those who stand in need of it, doing good to them and to yourself. Without this there is no Society of St. Vincent de Paul. This was the principle established when the Society was started, which is there to-day, and must remain there, if you wish to keep it what it is, the Society of St. Vincent de Paul. St. Vincent was not simply one who gave money to the poor. He was one who gave to the poor to do them good temporally and spiritually, while doing good to himself. He gave as much for himself as he gave it for them; and you, members of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, must carry out this principle. Remember this — that it is not the number of dollars you give. It is not the number of poor you assist. It is how you do it, and what good you do yourself. This is the principle. Remember this at this Golden Jubilee, in looking with pride at the success of this Society throughout the world. Let this principle sink deep down into your hearts; see whether you are the same as those who passed before you, so that you may hand it down to those who come after you; so that after the next fifty years they will simply wish to compare themselves to us, and not say that we had lost the tradition, and that they must go back beyond us to find the true tradition of St. Vincent de Paul.

There are certain dangers attending on your Society. There is the danger of having too many poor to attend to, and there is the danger of having too few members; if you

have too many poor and too few members, your time is taken up with immaterial work, and you cannot carry out the real intention of the Society. You see how it works in the returning Conferences. A member has only one, two, three, at the most, visits a week. This seems but little; but before they made these visits what did they then give to the poor? Were they in the habit of leaving their work, their evening, their club, their society to go out visiting the poor? And although these two visits in the week are but a trifle, yet it is a great deal, too, compared with what has been done. If you have too much to do you will do it carelessly. If you have too many visits, you will simply go and leave your gifts and return home. The true visitor of St. Vincent de Paul goes in as a friend. He is not there simply as a duty. He loves the poor. He comes to visit the poor of Christ as a friend, who sits down and makes inquiries about the poor man and finds out his state, and if he can aid him in a spiritual direction, he does so. He cares not so much for the body, which is to die, as for the soul which is to live forever. He gains the poor man's confidence by his charity, and then he seeks the end which St. Vincent de Paul established. They wish to raise the poor,— to elevate them,— and if they cannot be raised and elevated, they still help them and assist them. There are those who seek to raise the poor so that they will leave poverty. This is well, but not all. All cannot be raised out of poverty, and when we cannot raise them out of poverty, we are tempted to give them up — not to be encouraged, but to think there is no use doing anything for them. But the Christian visitor finds as much pleasure in visiting the one who never can rise out of poverty, as the one whom he can bring forth to competence. Why? Because his end is not only to assist the poor, but to do something for God. If he can do good to them in the meantime, very well, but it is not for that alone that he does it.

But to pass on: there is a danger to avoid; and allow me, to-day, to say these words to you, as if I were still at the head of the Conference. The Conferences are often too dull. Why? Because you don't try to make them interesting.

No one can visit the poor twice a week without finding something interesting. Let every night some one tell something about his poor. He does not mention names, but he gives an account of how he found the poor man; what he has done to relieve him; how he has succeeded; how his children have been sent to work or to school; how a place has been found for a young man. All these things are interesting, and remember when once you are interesting yourself in any work, you will make others interested in it. But if you simply make your visit, and think no more about it, your conference will be dull; you will not care for the poor very much, and gradually you will fall away one by one. Let us then remember to cultivate charity, cheerfulness, and humility. St. Vincent de Paul's Society has always been modest. This city has heard very little of it. They will know more of it to-morrow than they have ever known before. St. Vincent was always modest and humble. Those before you have carried out this same attribute of their saint. Carry it out also. You have taken up your collections in your conferences in secret. No one knows who has given. You carry it to the poor not in your name. It comes from the Conference. All is done by the Conference. Your conferences are not called after somebody; they are simply the conference of the parish. Modesty! You are working for God, and God knows what you do. It makes no difference what others know. You have not sought for money. Money has come to you. You have raised $20,000 a year! Where did it come from? Who can tell? Like so many drops of dew that are continually falling! You never see a large sum, yet here is all this money spent. It is not spent at once. It is spent in small sums, twice a week, all over the city, in different conferences, by hundreds of men. As this dew came to you, you let it fall again on the poor, and drop after drop, continually bringing amelioration to them, and also bringing glory to Almighty God for the charity done to his poor.

Let me therefore to-night encourage you in your work, encourage you to look back to the old traditions, and

remember what your president has told you. Be faithful to your work. Be faithful to your councils. You who belong to the council — Secretary, Vice-President, whatever be your title, be faithful to your council. Four times a year you have your general meeting. Be sure and come together. God loves charity and He loves faithfulness and action. It is true that you can receive in your own church the communion which you go there to receive together in the spirit of charity and love; but remember the grace which God has for you in carrying out the rules of your Society. Do not forget that God is all the time watching you and everything you do, and in every communion he gives you special grace, and you know not what use that grace may be to you for eternal purposes. I shall say no more to-night; but I wish to congratulate you, to encourage you, to give you every hope and blessing. Resolve that as you walk in the footsteps of those who walked before you in charity, humility and modesty, that you will continue to go on increasing and following in the same footsteps as long as you have this work before you.

Address of Rev. J. O'Conner, S. J., President of Boston College.

Your Grace, Very Reverend and Reverend Fathers, Brothers of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul:

There is a great oak near the little village of Pouy in the south of France, under whose cool, calm shade, three hundred years ago, as he tended his flock, a little shepherd boy used to take shelter. His careful, kindly nature made his pastoral labor one of love, and, by it, grace was training him to be, later in life, a good shepherd of men, as it had before transformed the fishermen of Galilee, into fishers of mens' immortal souls. A life of gentle sanctity, richest charity, — the foundation of two of the most active religious congregations in the church, whose missions and mercy in prison and hospital, on battle field, in plague, famine, despair

and poverty, only the agonized hearts relieved, and God's recording angels can know, — the admiration and devotion of every heart that loves its kind, the infallible voice of Christ's Vicar-Pontiff, bidding the world henceforth to call him saint, — all these have long since told our gladdened hearts, that, in this life and world of change, in which we must all move on for better or worse, the Shepherd of the oak has grown to be, that glory of the modern church, *dear* St. Vincent de Paul. But this is not to be *his* panegyric, whose climax of eulogy was uttered, when his name was writ on earth, on the church's diptychs ; the echo and shadow of whose glories are heard and seen in every word and act of mercy, of zealous Lazarist missionary and heroic Sister of Charity, in all the world, where truth is to be taught or mercy shown.

It is of a pilgrim visitor to that shrine of the oak of St. Vincent, and of his work and your own that we hold the festival to-night ; for this is the jubilee of the Conferences of St. Vincent de Paul ; Ozanam was their founder, fifty blessed, fruitful years agone, and you are their privileged members.

"I send you a leaf of the blessed oak of St. Vincent," Ozanam wrote to a cherished brother, thirty years ago ; "it will dry in the book where you place it ; but charity will never grow dry in your heart." Cherished brothers—workers of Ozanam, the councils of your society, in this evening's celebration, give each of you a leaflet from the garland of charity, that wreathed with zeal, merits and glory, the brows and hearts of the founders of the conference. Press it carefully and keep it well, in the book of your memory ; be true to your growing traditions ; and though this souvenir may wither, the charity of a loyal brother of the Society of Vincent and Ozanam will never grow dry in *your* hearts.

The Society of St. Vincent de Paul, was born in a duel,— in the vital conflict, between nineteenth-century irreligion, and the enduring Church of Christ. Paris, long the capital of overweening science and the purest faith, of the wildest luxury and most christian charity, was the battle ground and birth-place. History had been repeating itself in France, as

elsewhere, from the days of Clovis. And though the *true* gospel of liberty, equality and fraternity among men, had been preached to all the world, forever, from the rostrum of Calvary, pride, by turns, and mere philanthropy, passion, greed, the multiplied errors of the human mind, had been for centuries, interpolating and garbling its capital commandments, of love of God *first*, and then love of man for God. Feudal or monarchical tyranny, or mob law and revolution, with always the greater share of consequent misery, for the larger masses, of the weak and poor, made up the general history of the nation and the world; with only comparitively brief intervals of peace and justice, in which the church's true charity could carry out *Christ's* view of man's liberty, equality and fraternity.

Fifty years ago, perhaps, even more than to-day,— because it was just so much nearer the cauldron of revolution, the great metropolis of Paris, was reeking with the fumes of errors in science, philosophy, religion, morals, faith and history. The masses, pillaged of their faith and its saving, conservative doctrines, in the wild revolution,— full of their rights and ignorant of their obligations, had already grown to be the uncontrolled and uncontrollable mob of the faubourgs and barricades, and were beginning to train themselves to answer all obnoxious authority then with petroleum, as their imitators in so many capitals of the world, now, are only too ready to answer the oppressor's wrong by the argument of dynamite. The masters in the schools, having caused God to be supplanted by a license they would worship and call liberty, would, to be consistent, substitute for christian charity, only cold philanthropy.

And they boasted to the youth, Ozanam, when he and his six brave young fellow founders of your society,— only one of them being then over twenty years of age,— when these would answer, by the establishment of the conferences of St. Vincent de Paul, their taunting question, "What is Christ's Church *doing* for the masses?"— they boasted, that they, the scientists and theorists, were formulating in their schools, ideas and systems that would, indeed, reform the world, ban-

ish misery from it altogether, and do for humanity, in a moment, what the little Society of St. Vincent could not accomplish in centuries. But lo! only half a century is gone, since the first Conference Meeting, in the Rue Petit Bourbon, May, 1833; and, while the vaunted systems, philosophical, theological, philanthropical and the rest, of the Sorbonne and the haughty schools, — are dead of inanition, and been followed by others as flimsy and perishable, — while Jouffroi, Ozanam's loudest challenger, voicing the general verdict of fact, converted, exclaimed as he was dying, that all their systems and science were not worth one page of the Catholic catechism,— the last bulletin we have seen of Ozanam's little Society, records, for the triumph of charity and the lasting discomfiture of mere human striving, without faith, a marvellous success. It tabulates the charitable works of *tens of thousands* of Ozanams, quietly, humbly toiling for christian charity's sweet sake, as brothers of thousands of flourishing conferences, in almost every country of Europe, — I think Russia is the only one not named, — throughout North, Central and South America; in Africa, Asia, Australia and the islands of the sea. And the reports show, that the brethren expend, of their little conference *quêtes* or alms, on Christ's dearest poor, eight millions of francs, or a million six hundred thousand dollars, annually!

O science, philosophy, influence, wealth, ambition of the world, look on this gigantic *moral* oak,—the Society of St. Vincent de Paul! Only fifty years of growth, and its world-clasping branches, are sheltering the misery-beaten fledglings of poverty in every land. Recall the puny gland from which it sprung, dropped by the gentle hand of a true-hearted Ozanam. Look at then and now; at the birth, the struggle, the development, the triumph, the Jubilee! and take courage; for humanity, aided by God's grace and its own native vigor, is yet capable of deeds of great emprise.

Ozanam, Lallier, Lamache, Letaillandier, Devaux, Clavé and De la Noue, — they are all worthy of being mentioned, — were Catholic young men, pursuing their studies in the heart of the most corrupt, infidel capital in Europe. They were of

good family, generally well brought up in their faith, though even Ozanam tells us of his terrible struggle for a time, with his religious doubts and fears. You will easily realize, then, that, for their youth, the world of Paris had many dear allurements; for their passions, many dreadful temptations; for their time, many and varied occupations; for their virtue, the sternest trials; but for their Christian charity, because it was catholic and sterling, only triumph.

Their plan's development, in the beginning, was gradual; so careful were they at the first not to force their growth, that they were almost exclusive; and not till more than a year and a half after the foundation of the first conference, and then only after thorough debate, would they permit a second to be established. The Society, too, from the first, was conservative in its work, methods, means and manner of action: Christ in the midst of His beloved poor, being the model set for the conference member, in his dealings with his charges.

That the Society's success has been uniformly so great is scarcely matter of wonder. For charity once aglow in the knightly, Christian heart of Ozanam,— the noble desire once aroused to *do* something to prove to the scoffers of the *salons* and schools, that Christ's perpetual Church is always mistress of grace's, nature's rarest gifts — difficulties opposed themselves in vain. It concerned him little that he had a big ambition of his own to work for in the busy world; that history, literature, poetry, philosophy, the languages, law, science, were *all* yet to be made, by study, his strong points. He knew he must lecture with uninterrupted success; win from the ablest opponents a chair in the proudest university of the time; that he must travel much, write still more; be in turn dutiful son, devoted brother, husband, father, friend, and pious Christian. And yet, — he was borne betimes, when man's greatness is ordinarily only a ripening, over the blue Mediterranean, away from sunny Italy, which he had courted awhile to give him rest and strength, — which he loved for its beauty, its memories, its faith, *and* for its many conferences, — back to the threshold of his beloved France, to die at Marseilles, — a confessor

of charity, true son of St. Vincent, founder of your blessed, then already flourishing Society, to die at forty years of age! Truly, "Being made perfect in a short space, he fulfilled a long time." — *Wisdom* c. 4, v. 13.

And no portion of his or his Society's marvellous success was due to the chances of the hour. For it was God's work, carried out by the faith, prudence and ardor of his servants; and these are always superior to every chance. Ozanam and his companions seemed to grasp, once for all, the sublimity of the idea of Christian charity to the neighbor; that love of one's kind that sees in *every* man, under whatever grime of vice, obloquy or poverty, the image of the eternal God, making each, in so much, the equal of the proudest, and therefore always worthy of brotherly, considerate, gently-given aid, such as is directed in almost every rule of your Society's manual, to be cheerfully yielded to the poor, by the brothers of the conferences of St. Vincent de Paul.

These founders of your society did not thrust forward themselves or their work, as self-assured, novelty-loving enthusiasts of an hour, to show the Church of Christ *how* to do something in the cause of charity, to prove to the skeptic world that Christ was with her still. They knew, from their intelligent, practical faith, that she is at once the pillar and the ground of truth, and forever the depository of all the graces and powers for good in the world, with which the charity of the Sacred Human Heart of Jesus, and the Divine love of his Godly nature endowed her for all time. They knew that, as there always had been from the beginning, saints and heroes to do her work and God's for His beloved poor, so shall there be to the end; and that, if they would step into the breach that the sins of the age had made in the Church's outworks of faith, religion, morals, they must first, themselves, be true Catholics to the heart's core; themselves be first penetrated by such a spirit of charity as fired the heart of John, when it beat so close to Jesus' Heart; they must first themselves be humble, zealous and constant. And so they were, and they were successful so; and only so shall you and your work succeed.

The Fathers of your little republic of Christian charity wrote every rule in the manual of St. Vincent de Paul's Society, in such tenor, that each is a paraphrase of St. John's patriarchal commendation, so often repeated to those in whose hearts he would enkindle the charity, he had gathered warm and full, from its source, in Jesus' bosom: "My little children love one another."

"Tears of joy well up to my eyes," wrote Ozanam, "when, at great distances from the mother conference, I meet our little families; always little, by the obscurity of their work, but great, through the blessing of God upon them. The tongues are different; but there is always the same friendly clasp of the hand, the same brotherly cordiality. And we can recognize each other by the same sign as the early Christians: 'See how they love one another'!"

It is scarcely necessary to note, even in passing, that another, *open* secret of your Society's success — that has been, that shall ever be, — is in its strict adherence to its rules. From the wonderful charity of the early members sprang naturally, true humility. "Not to show ourselves, but when edification requires it, to let ourselves be seen," would be a good formula, the founder thought, for the children of St. Vincent, who should be, in spirit, life and action, like their patron: who, he said, should be really the Society's model, not merely a sign-board over its doors, or a legend on its escutcheon, as the glorious names and figures of St. Denis or St. Nicholas are often sign and figurehead for ale houses!

The warmth of true charity, tempered by humility, once diffused through the young Society, their zeal kept it aglow and their perseverance never let it cool. Why, they used to say to each other, may we not apply to the anti-christian evils of our age, — as great as those the first Christians had to grapple, — a charity as sweet and great as theirs? The great heart of the world has grown cold; it is ours to help call back the vital warmth of man's charity for man, and inaugurate anew if it must be, the epoch of martyrs. To be a martyr is possible, in some small degree, at least, for every Catholic. For it is to give, in any way, one's life for God

and fellow man; whether the sacrifice be achieved as the holocaust's, all at once, or, by slow degrees, as the flame of the altar lamp consumes its substance, night and day, to honor the eucharistic presence here; while the children of men are slumbering or away, and only it and the angels keep watch in the courts of the Lord. To be a martyr, is to give to God what He has given to us; of our means, strength, our blood or life, if need be. Every day we live, we part with some of the gift of life; it is ours to say, at whose altar we shall offer what we can spare of our earnings, our energies, our evenings; whether to the greedy idol of egotism or to the God of charity in those sacred sanctuaries of His, the homes of the poor. "Every day," said Ozanam, "our friends and brothers are killed as missionaries or as soldiers on the hot sands of Africa, or before the palaces of the mandarins. What are we doing meanwhile? Do we imagine that God has appointed some to die for civilization and the church, and us, with the rest, only to lounge through life and sleep on roses? O toilers of science, men of letters, men, too, of the trades, the shops, the farms, in all the country's industries, let us be ready to prove by our performance of duty to the suffering, that we too, have our battlefields, and that, if occasion call, *we can die on them*, to prove our love for God and fellow man and the Church Catholic.

And so, the great cities of France, Spain, Italy, England, soon found in their midst flourishing conferences of the Society, founded by the unflagging zeal of its early brothers. When Ozanam was almost dying, exhaustion prevented him from receiving, one day, a great prince, who, in stately equipage, drove up, to honor himself, as he said, with the acquaintance of the celebrated French *savant*. The worldly ambition of the *savant* was well nigh spent with his waning life, and the Prince was denied the audience. But the zeal of the dying *brother* of the conference of St. Vincent de Paul, was as strong as ever; and the same evening, Ozanam received, and, during two hours, gave the necessary directions and encouragement to a poor young man, who had walked many weary leagues from Leghorn, to obtain the information

requisite for the establishment of a conference in his native village.

And their zeal too, had plenty of opposition to sustain it. It is impossible to conceal from ourselves, they said to each other, the fact that our Society is often met with distrust. The big-wigs of orthodoxy, fathers of the council, in dress-coats and strapped pantaloons; doctors, who lay down the law, between the morning's newspaper and their business accounts; persons to whom whatever is new is unwelcome, and by whom, everything emanating from Paris is assumed to be wicked, — whose personal opinion in politics is a thirteenth article of the creed to them; who appropriate works of charity as their own belongings, declaring, modestly, as they put themselves in our Lord's place, "whosoever is not with me is against me;" these, with all the positively uncharitable and the negatively indifferent, directly or indirectly opposed them. But all this opposition, their scantiness of means, their multiplicity of employments, youth, temptation itself, — all proved wholesome nutriment for this offspring of Christian charity, the little society of St. Vincent and Ozanam. Its true catholic spirit, adherence to rule, its humility, zeal, constancy, assimilated all the heterogeneous elements. It grew, matured and flourished; and we hold glad jubilee to-night, over the golden wedding of yet another fair daughter of Christ and Christian charity.

But, for your honor, as sons of such fathers in the Lord, you owe them reverence. For your inheritance, as heirs to the spiritual treasure they have left you, in the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, you owe them gratitude and imitation. For your privilege, as guardians for the Church, of this most useful, working monument of Christian zeal, which they have built up and entrusted to you, there is on you the responsibility that it suffer nothing from your guardianship; but that it be handed by you, greater grown, with more usefulness endowed, to your children, for a doubly glorious jubilee, when you are gone. And, therefore, is there on you the obligation of being, or becoming, in the true spirit of the Church and your Society, charitable, rule observing, humble, zealous, persevering, as your early brothers were.

The world is surely still enough astray; skepticism and cold philanthropy still bruiting abroad its taunting challenge to our faith, "What is your Church *doing* to prove herself Christ's, to ameliorate the condition of the poor? Why do her children fill our public institutions?" But is it not true, that Christ himself has told us, "The poor you shall have always with you!" They are a part and parcel of God's providence for all time — and God's promise that they shall be always with us, is it not an everlasting patent for your Society, or such as yours; because you are sure there will always be in the world those who will need your charity. And again, it is not God who made the poor so. He does not send men into the chances of this world, as Ozanam wrote, unprovided with those two sources of riches, — the fountain of all others, — intelligence and will. Why should we hide from the people what they know already, and flatter them, like bad kings? It is human liberty that makes the poor, drying up in them those two primitive sources of wealth, by allowing intelligence to be quenched in ignorance and the will to be weakened by sin. The working classes know this now without our telling them. But God forbid that we should calumniate the poor, whom the Gospel blesses, and attribute their misery alone to themselves; for thus we should pander to the hardness of those bad hearts that fancy themselves exonerated from helping the poor man, when they have proved his wrong doing. The Church of God, the rules of your Society, are constantly telling you, that it is yours to prevent, as much as possible, that any be left in the sorry plight of that most pitiable of beings, the ward of a non-Christian state; that cares for his morals, only in the light of political economy, and for his immortal soul not at all. Almost in vain, as far as religion is concerned, the stately walls and halls and spires of our public institutions are reared, in mocking grandeur of the squalor they are to shelter, if Christ's charity may not enter and comfort the bruised heart, the broken ambition, the lost hope, the shattered virtue of the inmates, while their famished bodies are fed on the cold bread of philanthropy. This indeed, humiliates, demoral-

izes the recipient; but true charity heals forever the souls that fester in poverty; the souls that often grow hardened, despairing and faithless, when they feel themselves outcasts from their kind, pariahs of the city's highways and byways, or immured in institutions, where often religion's sweet consolations may not follow them. To respond to these and such crying wants, that are often saddest when they dare not cry aloud, is your special charge. Then, indeed, as you have been told before to-night, insignificant truly would be the alms you could supply, if there did not go with it, as your rule lays down, the alms of Christian sympathy, advice, encouragement; if you did not manfully do your share, be this ever so small or remote, to help to give a Christian education to the children of the poor in this age and time and place, where its deficiency appears to be the *capital* want. Take up your Manual and rule. Study them; see *how* you must give and do by Christ's poor, if you would consistently fill your role, as brother of the Society of St. Vincent and Ozanam. They held, and justly, that help humiliates when it appeals to men from below, from their material wants only,— what we succor even in the beasts,— when there is no reciprocity. But it honors when it appeals to him from above; occupies itself about his soul, his religious, moral education; when to the bread that nourishes, it adds the visit that consoles, the advice that enlightens, the friendly grasp of the hand that raises up the sinking courage.

Members of the conferences, help thus your wards, and you will find that no great personal means are necessary. Regulate beforehand, as Ozanam did each year, how much you can spare to Poor Jesus in His suffering members, and you will not be so often forced by selfishness to answer, when these cry to you for assistance: "I cannot afford to help you," when you truly know not whether you can or no. "There is a way of giving," says Lacordaire, "a charm that disguises the benefit; a transparency that lets you look into the heart of the poor man and teaches you to love it; a something gentle, simple; a kindly anticipation that draws the whole being and makes man prefer the spectacle of kindness to that even of genius."

When this, almost saintly perfection of your charity, that is thus required of you by your rule, would arouse your fears or tempt to discouragement, let not your hearts whisper, that such lofty principle and generous practice were indigenous to Catholic France, almost natural to her knightly sons, in a more heroic, less common-place age than this of ours; but that they are too rich a growth for cold, calculating America; for the sons of Ireland, herself so long persecuted and poor. Ozanam knew this country well and Erin well, and loved them both, for the great hopes he had of both. "Put me not down," he writes, "as an enemy of the Yankees. To my thinking, that nation will, of all, best realize the political idea of a prosperous government of the people by the people, to which modern society in general now is tending." And he expressed warm approval of some of the speeches of our country's President, of the great public processions of the laboring classes, of which a friend wrote him, having been present at the same here in Boston. Nor did the founder of your Society hesitate to say, that our calm, disciplined democracy, as he styled this nation, wielded a greater power than the armed battalions of the older countries. Ireland and Ireland's sons he loved for their faith, for their genius, their apostleship; and Bridget, Columba, Kevin, Brendan and Patrick were among his best beloved heroes.

Go forth, then, with all the energy, enterprise, tact of Americans, all the apostolic charity of your Irish blood and faith, that fed the world for ages, with the bread of life, in the gloaming of Christianity; and that now, in its high noon, feeds it still, even while she herself, chiefly for the reason that she is loyal to faith, is famishing and hurled out to exile for the want of her daily bread. Go forth from this, resolved to be better working members of your various conferences. For every cup of water, every crust and dole and cast-off garment, but most of all, every kindly, Christian word or act you say or do, to any of the least of the little ones of Christ's poor, will cover a part, at least of the multitude of your own sins. They will fill up your, perhaps so far, scanty cata-

logue of good deeds and claims for everlasting merits. They will anchor your faith more firmly in your souls; teach you your beautiful religion better; for there are grand lessons to be learned in the homes of the poor. Your benefactions will rebound in blessings upon your wives and daughters; for the tears and prayers of heart-broken, grateful wives and mothers comforted, of Christian daughters, saved to faith and purity, will bring down benedictions in kind, on those whom affection locks so close to your own bosoms. Your lives of charity will teach your sons, better than words or sermons, — teach the young men who are in such danger, who begin to show such signs of yielding to it, what Catholic Christianity is, in deed and in practice. It will teach them this, not from the painted pictures of Christ, such even as were painted by the inspiration of the great masters; not from her splendid temples or altars, resplendent with gold and light, but it will place, under their touch, palpably, Christ Himself, living and breathing still; His wounds still bleeding, — in the persons of His poor, by you comforted, as Christ would have you comfort them. Count not then, to-night, what you *have* done, but resolve from this jubilee anniversary, to do *more* as members of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, and to do it better.

When Ozanam, with two of his companions, went, as was their duty, to consult the venerable Archbishop de Quélen, of Paris, on a matter of interest to the church, he blessed them and their project, and, clasping the heads of the three at once to his heart, he said, "I embrace in your persons, all the Catholic youth of France." Brothers of the conferences of St. Vincent de Paul, the founder of your Society, in this Metropolitan See, in this very parish, as you have heard, when he was its pastor, now become, by the grace of God and the favor of the Apostolic See, the province's well beloved Archbishop, comes to embrace *you* all to-night, in the great arms of Catholic charity, and bless you all for the work you have done. When his God and ours comes forth from His tabernacle-home to ratify this blessing, and give His own benediction all divine, oh fervently pray Him, to

bless the greater, more useful, more thoroughly done work, that you all have yet to do, as brothers of the blessed Society of St. Vincent de Paul.

After the address by Father O'Connor the Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament was given by His Grace, and the singing of the Te Deum closed the exercises of the evening. The body of the church was filled by members of the Society and their friends, and a large number of the clergy were present in the sanctuary, among whom were seen several of the Spiritual Directors of the Conferences or their representatives.

At the Particular Council, held just previous to the celebration, it was proposed that a work commemorative of the occasion should be founded, and to put this in practical form a committee was appointed to investigate and report to what extent the Society could be made useful in a direction heretofore untried and one in which many obstacles may have to be overcome.

A very generous collection was taken up at the Sunday evening services, which will, undoubtedly, more than defray any expenses which may have been incurred, and a donation of one hundred dollars, made by a distinguished non-catholic gentleman, on receipt of an invitation to be present, should not pass unacknowledged.

St. James Conference deserves mention for the admirable manner in which they carried out the arrangements at the church.

JOHN J. MUNDO,
Secretary.

(Dec., 1888, 20,000)

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